THE EGO BOOK

Vance Thompson

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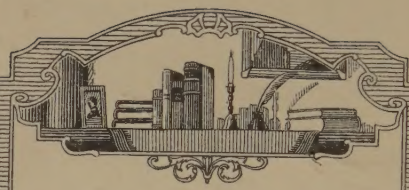

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The Ego Book

A Book of Selfish Ideals

By

Vance Thompson

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DR. WILLIAM J. O'SULLIVAN

Will you permit me to inscribe your name in this little book of Good Intentions, as a slight record of my profound admiration for the scientist and scholar and my sincere affection for the friend?

VANCE THOMPSON.

254441

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The Ego Book

Chapter I

When The Ego Wakes

I

I WAS waiting for a train in a railway station. Huddled on a bench was a black-skirted old woman in cap and apron; she sat there babbling and smiling at something that lay on her lap. I drew near and looked at it. Evidently it belonged to

the human species. It was, indeed, a new born man, almost bald and toothless.

"Hail, brother," I said, "and how do you like it as far as you've got?"

He blinked up at me with pale, startled eyes; then he glanced at the old woman; and finally he fixed his eyes thoughtfully on his pudgy right hand. Now at that very moment—with instantaneous coincidence—two splendid and formidable things happened. The first was this:

The new-born man heard a voice which was not my voice nor that of the babbling crone in whose lap he lay; it was another voice,

a voice of exile, a voice from extremely far-off, faint and extenuate, but, as he listened, it seemed to verberate in him like bells; and the voice said to him:

"The First Person is the One Who Speaks,

"The Second Person is the One Spoken to,

"The Third Person is the One Spoken of;

"I am—thou art—she is."

The new-born man had discovered his ego; it had dawned upon him that he was himself—*ipsissimus;* and in the blinding glory of this discovery he lifted up his voice and screamed aloud.

That was the first thing that

happened; the second—quite as splendid and nearly as formidable—was that I determined to write this book. (There was the first chapter ready to my hand. Toothless and almost bald, but fierce-eyed and indomitable, it lay there and roared: "I am here—take notice!")

The porters and casual passengers saw in that bundle of lace and pink flesh merely a squalling brat, for (as in the poem) "still the brat squalled on"; but I knew better; I knew that in him were the two mightiest potentialities on earth: a new-born ego and a book.

In him there was an ego awake. The man inside that wingless lump

of flesh had begun signalling to the outer world. He had differentiated his individuality from the fluctuant group-soul of humanity. He was—at that splendid moment—victoriously himself. For a long time I stood there looking (with approval) upon that significant performance; but at last I began to think he was overdoing it.

I said: "Brother, aren't you exaggerating your importance?"

"Not to myself," his answer seemed to be.

I sat down beside him and we stared at each other in manly silence; a minute passed.

Now the beauty of talking to a new-born man is that you can

say everything to him — everything.

A minute passed.

"Brother," said I, "the question of your importance is debatable. Let us debate it. A minute has passed—and in that minute one hundred human beings like you (toothless and almost bald) were born and in that minute one hundred human beings (tending to toothlessness and baldness) died. The calculation is not my own. It was made long ago. It has the air of being exact. If for one hour you lie squalling on that lank aproned lap, exactly six thousand corpses will fall to right and left of you; and exactly six thousand

new fierce voices will take up the wail of humanity. Aren't you laying undue stress upon your own importance? Indeed there is more to it than I have told you, for overhead whirl the infinite millions waiting to be born, while along the earth-road stumbles the countless multitude that has not yet earned the right to die."

A minute passed.

And I said: "To the mathematical mind, brother, you are only the hundredth part of a minute."

This seemed to sadden him; he wrinkled up his face and ejected a milky substance from his mouth; then he looked at me in a conversational way and I gathered

that his thoughts were something like this: "That man in the yellow necktie is interested in me; it is quite natural; and I daresay he would like to know where I came from."

"Indeed there has been some debate on that subject," I admitted; "suppose you clear up the mystery. You may be merely a 'human form of the universal rhythm,' as the quaint scientists aver. You may be, as a quainter scientist insists, merely a 'temporarily stable form of intra-atomic energy.' Or, you may be something else—what?"

The new-born man threw himself back and howled with derision.

The aged woman tried to hush him. She said, "shh—shh!" and slapped his stomach; but my advice was: "Roar, brother, and affirm your ego"—and he did. He roared and affirmed himself.

That is the way man's life in the world begins.

II

There is nothing so absolutely fearless as the new-born man. He is sheathed in flabby flesh. The light stabs his eyes. His unfamiliar intestines do not stretch properly. His nerves and muscles are not rightly coördinated. There is a crack in the top of his unfinished skull. The kind of food he

gets would sicken any man. And his pulpy body is so small it may be picked up and tossed about like a ball of cotton. Quite true; but inside the small, pulpy body there is a valiant and vehement man who does not know what fear is. As I have said, he knows he is himself—*ipsissimus*. Why should he not be bold? Frank and fearless he comes into the world, screaming "I am I," and looks round him for his welcome.

Now it is a melancholy but indubitable fact, that in a few years—by the time he is short-coated or anyway by the time he is breeched—all this fine, open courage is driven into conceal-

ment. When the first danger-signal is set it runs for cover. I do not say this is wholly the fault of parents and guardians; in a measure I lay it to our defective organisation of society, to the very structure of social life, which places the child in an environment of grown-up thought and grown-up action—thought and action distorted by the harsh and artificial conditions of life; and this works the same whether the new-born man begins his earth-adventure in a mansion or an orphan-asylum.

It is a terrifying truth that nine-tenths of human felicity depends upon being well born.

By this statement I do not mean

felicity depends upon having been dandled upon the knees of a duchess. (Or even upon the knees of a viscountess.) One is well born when he emerges into an environment where he is permitted to be himself and where he may, triumphantly, affirm his individuality. Now this does not happen to one new-born man in ten. And that is the reason why, so often, childhood is a dark and tragic thing. Unafraid, forth-coming, and accessible, the young ego confronts the old world which is to him so new. And the world —amiably or ill-naturedly—pokes at his curves and snubs off his angles and tries to shape him all

over again. This is not education, mark you; and it has nothing to do with education; it is merely the working of that intolerant desire which is in every one of us to make things over after our own image. No father can possibly conceive that his son wouldn't be the better for fitting into the pattern he has cut for him.

In a moment of profound thought Plato discovered that only one thing had been distributed to the entire satisfaction of each and of every man; and that was intellect. Every man is perfectly satisfied with his brains. He may regret that he is not six feet tall—that his hair is red—that he walks on a

club-foot; he may be of the opinion that wealth, power, rank, opportunity have been dealt out with dolesome inequality; but never—for an instant—is he dissatisfied with the intellect bestowed upon him. Satisfied with it? He is so proud of it he wants to set it up as a standard for all the little new-born men who fall into his hands. There are no exceptions. None of us can get away from it. (Even I, an essentially modest man, am writing these pages to convince you that if you really want to be good to yourself you should follow my way of thinking.)

That is what the new-born man

has to face when he takes his ego out for an airing down the promenade of life. No one is content to let him be himself. Perhaps a firm parent (*ferreus est, eheu!*) jams the young ego into his own iron matrix; perhaps an utter stranger bends it into his own, peculiar ideal of curvilinear beauty. In any case the new-breeched ego limps home, a bruised and battered thing. Do you wonder that a little of its courage—once so confident and careless—is gone? When the new-born man has got his ego home again, what he does —instinctively—is to set about protecting it. If he is a fairly good boy—as you were, I presume,

or you would not have grown up to read good books—if he is a good boy, I say, he builds round himself a wall of reticence. He digs holes, deep holes and tortuous burrows, into which his ego can pop at the first sign of danger. No longer frank; his boldness beaten down; experience has taught him the pitiable necessity of running for cover. It is a sad thing; and it makes for thought. There is something wrong when almost every breeched boy has to lead a double life—when reticence (if it be no more than reticence) is the law of self-preservation.

III

Oftener than not a boy's lie is

merely a poor mean hurried defence thrown up to protect his menaced ego. (So the mollusc builds a shell round its soft body.) It is a natural process. (So the cephalopodian cuttle-fish darkens the water with sepia dye and hides from danger in the darkness.) It is a way that nature has.

And the boy's lie is not only natural; it is almost instinctive. It is—to his immature judgment—the readiest way of defending his individuality. The question is not one of morals; at this point it hardly enters the realm of ethical discussion. In the beginning it is an instinctive need of self-protection that makes the new-born man

shell himself over with a calcareous covering of deception, reticence, falsehood; and safe inside the shell his ego grows and fattens like an oyster.

I do not say this is a good thing; I say distinctly it is a bad and calamitous thing; but it is not the fault of the oyster—or the new-born man. The oyster, one might fancy, would prefer to swim his wet world joyously naked in an opalescent skin; and the new-born man had rather keep his first, frank, forthcoming, unhesitating courage; but if the oyster is to live, it must have the protection of a shell, and the young ego—if it is to survive—must have a fortress.

There are, to be sure, instances where a new-born man has come into an environment so sympathetic that he has no need for burrow or tower. I think these instances are rarer than is usually thought. The new-born man may find love, devotion, adoration, but find, none the less, that his individuality—the one thing which permits him to say "I am"—is attacked at every point.

Have sympathy for your brother, the oyster! And sympathy for the soft-shelled ego that has come into your house!

It is possible that you are a professor of homiletics; that to-day you walk the moral law with

undeviating precision as a circus-maiden walks the tight-rope; but if you will look back into your boyhood you will find it full of burrows and fortresses and dark, hollow places, where you and the Lie crouched together in hiding.

What else could you do? Think it over. And what other thing can the new-breeched man in your nursery do? (Granted, of course, that his ego is menaced.) The boy is right to build a fortress even if (unhappily) he has to build it out of deceits and sham and falsehood.

And now of two things one will happen: Either — when he is strong enough, when his ego has

affirmed itself—he will walk out and leave the walls behind; or, tragically, he will find that he can't get out. The first is the normal boy; he is the kind of a boy that you were and that your father was and that your son will be; but for the moment my interest is with that other wretched boy whose tower has become a prison. What he forgot was that the most important architectural feature of every stronghold is—the drawbridge. He has left only a barred window to peer out through; a window through which the casual passer-by may throw stones and flints at his pallid and dirty face. He is the eternal victim of nature

and of life, exile from happiness, the world's grim example of necessary reprisal.

One way or the other; of these two ways one; yet even that prisoner of the lie I shall not wholly blame—it was his melancholy destiny not to be well born.

IV

There is nothing so tragic, I think, as this first adventure in life of the young ego striving to find itself and attempting to establish itself on fair terms in an alien and unfamiliar environment.

Do you know that children have committed suicide?

Not hundreds but thousands of them.

And for what seemed tiny causes, ridiculous, ephemeral, making for laughter.

Always behind the childish reasons is one implacable and compelling reason, and what it is you know. The new-born ego, sensitive as an uncovered nerve, had been pawed and bruised and dirtied until (with horror) it fled away to a very certain refuge. I know a distinguished German scholar who, when he was ten years of age, tried to kill himself with a pistol-shot.

"Why, in reason's name, did you try to do it?" I asked.

"Terror," he replied, "the man inside was trying to run away from life."

It was not that love was lacking; he was born into the very warmth and shelter and lighted room of love; what was lacking was understanding and (put it bluntly) due respect for an ego which was essentially his own and was not the ego of any other person, even though that person were the first-of-kin.

These thoughts, and others, came to me as I stood in the railway station looking at the toothless and almost bald man who lay, wrapped in lace and flannel, in an old woman's lap.

When my train was called, I let it go away to the mountains without me.

"Brother," I said, "that newborn ego of yours has a long pedigree. The quaint scientist will trace it back, in its evolution, to the pale protozoads who exchanged their paranucleary substance in the first vague, groping kiss. (At which moment, brother, love was born—and death.) It is a long evolution. Down through the years you journeyed acquiring, attaining, perfecting the machine which is your ego. And, brother, you have a right to affirm and maintain it. You are living out a life the curves of which were

plotted far back in the dim night of evolution. Millions of years went to your making. Go your way; for if you are to survive you must go your own way—and the way of none other."

At this picture of an eternal past and a menacing future, the newborn man howled aloud. I watched him, without disapproval. In a little while he became strangely red in the face and breathless. Then silence. Suddenly a look of curious intentness came over his face, as though he were listening to a ventriloquistic voice. He had heard the voice of hunger. He gave a fierce yell, which even the aged and wrinkled woman under-

stood; what it said was: "I am I—feed me!"

It was a plain and precise statement.

"Feed me"—but there was no food, of the kind he liked, to be had; the old, old nurse did not have any (and I did not have any).

From a black silk bag she took out a hollow ivory ball filled with pebbles or shot, and attached to a short ivory handle; and she rattled it in his face.

It was a moment before he realized the full infamy of the proceedings—that he who had demanded a special kind of food should be mocked by the rattling

of an ivory ball with pebbles in it! His wrath roared aloud.

"Howl on, O new-born man," I said, "she is not the only woman who will deceive you!"

And I went away.

Chapter II

How to Protect Yourself in the Family

I

YOU were born, I happen to know, in a family. There are few exceptions. It is one of those universal and inextricable situations for which the popular imagination has found an apt expression:

De quelque côté qué je me tourne Je vois la ville de Libourne.

And the family—it is your town of Libourne; and mine. You are

born in it and, turn as you will, it confronts you. The most tremendous moment in life is when the ego wakes and looks about and sees tall people standing round it, as trees stand round the house. Who are these people? Why are they here? And how came he, the new-fledged ego, among them? I believe that every boy has lived in this mystery and asked himself these questions. There is a tall man there whom he does not know, whom, indeed, he can with difficulty know until he is himself a man. There is a tall woman there who stoops to him and captures by cajolery his earliest attention. Amazing things he

thinks of her, for she is the first idol as she is the last.

You do not expect me to attack this idol. *Toucher à la mère, y pense-tu?*—that is a sacrilege uncommitted in the ages; and wo unto him by whom it shall come; but it is well to see these tall people of the household as the young and bewildered stranger in the house sees them. The father's attack upon his individuality is due to that dreadful intellectual vanity which would fain see his son's mind bent as his own is bent. It is natural, as has been said, for few men can conceive of an intellect better than their own. And it is natural that the attorney should

see in his son an immature but promising attorney—as the wolf sees a wolf in his cub. Happily for the boy it is only at odd times that the father makes an attack upon his nascent individuality—only now and then when the more immediate cares of the day are put away. But the mother is unfailing and unresting in the attack. By bribes and by threats, by kisses and laughter and abysmal self-sacrifice she captures him. She storms the stronghold of his being as Cossacks storm a town. Even his love—his beautiful instinctive filial love—is not free love; it is chained in caresses and tied up in menaces and bribed with comfits.

And to gain liberty to be himself (often) the son must be a bad son. Until he knows—that is, until he learns how to protect himself in the family into which he has fallen.

There were (I remember) other strangers in your family. One of them was a girl with a lot of brown hair on her head and eyes the color of a bee. She was young for a girl and slim. One of your earliest and most awful memories is of being danced on her sharp knees. She was one of your most fearsome enemies. No one, it seemed, could invent more ways of showing disrespect for your ego. Her kisses were given

in a way that made them a daily and public humiliation. You had rather been the pet of a python. The boy you found in the house when you got there was more easily tolerated. He was only a few years older than you were and the warfare was waged on more equal terms. You seemed to have an instinctive knowledge of his plan of attack. And one day —that was the beginning of strange things—you were able to foretell exactly how he was planning to make a breach in your wall of defense. It was as though your thought had jumped with his; it was more—it was as though you were inside his skin, sitting there

with him like a twin, and hearing him think. It was the most amazing thing! For the adventure went far; you discovered that he was not merely a red-headed, tweed-breeched ruffian of an enemy named Rufus; you discovered, as well, that inside him was an ego—not exactly like yours, not as interesting as yours, but, at all events, a distinct and recognizable ego.

You gasped; and the shock of it —or Rufus—knocked you off the garden wall.

II

That was a memorable day. It was a greater day than that upon

which the ego woke and said: "I am I—feed me!" It was the day of all days. It was the day the ego first recognized it was not walking the world alone. If I remember rightly, you thrilled with a finer joy than any joy that man may know—save one. (Of that joy there shall be word hereafter.)

For a while you lay on the lawn where you had fallen from the wall. The breath had been bumped out of you, but when it came back you made use of it to shout: "Hi! Rufus!"

Rufus had gone.

You lay on your back and stared up at the tree-tops. They were whispering in the wind, but they

said nothing to you. Nature never says anything to a child. To read its message one must look at it with eyes already old. But you lay there and stared at the tree-tops while swift waves of exultation coursed through you from heel to hair.

"Philemon, Philemon!" you said to yourself—you were named Philemon after a tall person with a cleft chin and a long purse, who had come into your family disguised as an uncle, "Philemon—it was all a mistake—you are not alone in a world of moving, mouthing, eating, kissing shadows—hid in these strange enemies are other egos, curiously like your own."

And you stood up and walked abroad; young, strong, audacious, you walked the earth, haughtily—as though you had secret and formidable allies everywhere. And indeed you had.

You were no such temerarious fool as to put your Discovery to the test without due preparation. You were a cautious Philemon. For days you went round Rufus, looking for an opening—soft-footed as a wolf goes round a sheepfold. That ruffian had every gate locked. And then one day (it was in a rather dangerous and mysterious place at the foot of the lawn near a menacing hedge) you found the slim girl—all hair and

teeth and eyes and beauty, like a cat—curled up in the shade, reading or pretending to read (for you were never quite sure of her) in a book. Her name was Kathryn and she had the part of sister in the family you came into. Practically you knew nothing of her, except that she was a hard and dangerous enemy—the one vulnerable point you had found was to call her "Kat," which seemed to draw blood.

You sat down three feet away from her and looked at her. What she would do you did not know—the distance of three feet meant some sort of safety; but you hoped, with a strangely eager

hope, that her ego would slip out of her and come and have a talk with you.

"Kathryn," you said; that meant you were on a peaceful mission; it was unusual and attracted her attention; she glanced up wonderingly from her book and put the hair out of her eyes.

"Well?" she asked.

You wanted to tell her about your Discovery.

"Kathryn, I've found out something," you said; "Rufus isn't just a boy."

"I know he isn't," Kathryn calmly replied; "he's a little red-headed beast."

You were grieved; you felt

sorry for Kathryn; she seemed pathetically young--that was the way you used to talk before you made the Discovery. You looked at her sadly; and you saw that she was watching you with eyes the color of a bee—indeed the color of two bees.

"What's the matter, Phil?"

Phil was a peace-word; her way of insulting you was to call you Filly.

And you told her of your Discovery. It was hard to tell. At first she seemed to think there was a Mad Boy in the family. But after a while, when you told her how you and Rufus were sitting on the wall and (while you were fore-

casting trouble) you had somehow or other peeped inside Rufus and discovered—to your amazement! —that there was another fellow inside Rufus very much like yourself; it had made you feel "aw'fly" good; and you wondered whether there was anyone inside her—and would she tell you.

Very quiet there in the mysterious shadow of the hedge, you remember; and Kathryn looking at you with eyes that were mysterious too, but bright; and she said: "Why, Phil, you are grown up."

Out of a sagacity, old as the life of the planet, you answered: "I always was."

III

'Twas a shy queer game you played with Kathryn. Hers was not so accessible, so courteous, and forthcoming an ego as your own. It would dart out like a sun-lizard, show you its shifting, flashing colors for a moment and then dart back again. You'd stare with astonishment and find there was nothing but Kat there. Of course that was not so bad now, for you could put up with a good deal of Kat, knowing all the while there was a secret and shining ally inside.

Rufus was a harder fortress to take. That extraordinary boy seemed to have been born without

a drawbridge. And he was a remarkable strategist. He seemed to know in some Napoleonic way just where you and Kathryn were trying to drive a mine under his fortifications; and bang—he had you countermined like that! One day you got him. (That is Rufus's story; it wouldn't be fair to print it in a book—and he black-robed and sitting now on a judicial bench!) But you certainly got him; you and Kathryn; and when he did come out you found that the man inside wasn't at all like the truculent, red-headed tyrant who passed in your family for a brother. He was a companionable fellow and a valuable

ally. What was oddest was that he had had remarkable experiences which had never come in your way nor in Kathryn's. For one thing he did not believe in abstract ideas. He said there was no such thing as an abstract idea.

And Kathryn asked: "What about duty?"

"Duty," said Rufus, "isn't one thing—it is a lot of things. It's your duty to go to school and to scrub the back of your neck and to fold up your clothes at night and run a thread between your teeth and say 'Thank you' and 'Please'—each one is a duty, but there isn't any such thing as Duty. If there is, why don't it come round here and

let us have a look at it. Everything can either walk or fly or swim or lie still like a stone and you can see it—or sit on it—and know it is there."

That was the way the man inside Rufus used to go on; you and Kathryn did not agree with him—especially Kathryn, who said the Noblest Object of Adoration was an abstract idea—but you liked to hear him talk. He knew things you had never known—or perhaps had forgotten.

It was a splendid thing, this discovery of allies hidden in the two young brawling enemies who were living in your house. And the best of it was that even Rufus

admitted there was a man inside him and began to take a sort of pride in letting him out now and then for an airing. Of course he only did this when the two tall strangers in your family were not about.

Looking back upon it now it seems to you almost miraculous that you should have ever made their acquaintance at all. They stood so high they breathed a different layer of the atmosphere, and when they stooped it was as though tall poplars had leaned down to say something to the grass.

The hardest thing on earth is to know a person who is not of

your own generation. I have a friend (if you will pardon me for thrusting myself into this chapter which belongs to you) who, when first I knew him, was a boy. At least the body he walked the world in was that of a boy. For a year or so I had not seen him. One day he came into my study and held out his hand—you would have said he was still a boy, but I knew at once he had jumped the barrier that had divided his generation from mine; to-day our egos eye each other with perfect confidence. Now the generation that stands just above a child is—in some crushing way—the most difficult of comprehension. Even the gen-

eration above it seems more understandable. A boy will get to know — for example — his grandfather and that good man's ego, long before he comes upon speaking terms with the ego of his own father. It is curious; and there must be some law in it, as there is in everything else; it appears in the flimsiest fashion of the day as well as in human relations. An illustration:

There was given recently in a notorious city—a city without myth or mystery—an exhibition of what was called Bad Taste. What it really was was an exhibition of sinister and profound vulgarity, for the Bad Taste it jeered

at was that of the generation just above—of the mother and the father. And yet I saw in it the working of that mysterious law to which I have just drawn your attention. For—note this—bad taste is invariably the taste of the generation immediately preceding our own. The bad taste of the time of Shakespeare was Spenser; that of Pope's day was Shakespeare; that of Wordsworth's time was Pope. And to the next generation all that is beautiful for us will seem hideous—all that for us is gracious will seem ridiculous—all that is rich poor. Our delicious boudoirs, our charming drawing-rooms, our ravishing costumes, our

thrilling dramas, our interesting books (perhaps even this one!), our *l'art moderne*—oh, oh, how they will be stuffed away into garrets, pulped into paper, mere shot rubbish given to the tides. It is part of that queer law. That a little later our grandchildren—jeering at the taste of their fathers—will take it down from the garret and worship it again is our only consolation.

There is no bad taste except the taste of the generation immediately preceding our own; grandfather's clock is all right; it is only father's clock that is the scorn and derision of youth.

A law—Therefore is it that the

egos dwelling in a family as boy and girl and boy find it hardest of all to get on terms of intimacy with the father and mother of the house.

Since I have already told so much about your family, you do not mind—do you?—my telling a little more. The tall man, whose rôle was that of father in your family, had a thin, pale face, made fine by the habit of thought. His eyes were gray and he had (then) short, thick, brown hair brushed back from his forehead. He wore gold reading-glasses which gave him an air of being foreign and occult. For years you stalked his ego, lying in wait

for it at every turn of his thought. Between you and him was the opaque glass shield which divides generation from generation. You will remember it was Kathryn who broke the glass, but that is her own story—her own grievous, tragic story—and you would not like me to tell it here though the telling cannot hurt her any more —forever. Behind the shattered glass you found a man sitting; and the man within looked out and saw you; and you knew each other—miraculously, in the darkness and fierce sorrow of that hour, the man within the father knew the man within the son.

You have often told me, in

quiet hours, how the last idol fell—the first and last idol, which is the Mother. One cannot love an idol. One may worship it; and in worship there is something of the unknown—one worships only the aloof and the far-away. That you loved her seemed to be the first thing that beat in upon your awakened consciousness; but it was a love that went in chains and fattened on bribes and sacrifices and habits. You loved your idol. You would have thrown yourself beneath the crushing wheels it was carried abroad on. You loved your idol; but it was unknown and mysterious—standing up high among the clouds of an

upper generation. But the gateway to that temple—the door of that ego—you opened at last. All brave and beautiful deeds are simple. You did it quite simply. I remember the very words in which you described it: "I just let down my drawbridge and stepped out and stood quite still where she could see me. She was sitting by the window in the twilight; I could see her face—it was like a cameo against the fading copper of the sky. She turned and looked at me—"

And the rest is your story and your secret; and hers.

IV

I do not know whether I have made quite clear your adventures in the family into which you were born, so that others may profit by them. To me it seems very clear. You learned how to protect yourself in your family by making allies, first of one and then of all. You made your fortress impregnable by letting down the drawbridge and taking the warders away from the gate. You made the man inside you invincible by letting him go forth, naked and without weapons.

Your secret was a simple one. Magnificent as your Discovery

was, it was simple, too—that within the strangers, who dwelt in your house, lurked egos like your own, shining and forthcoming and courageous. That was all.

Chapter III

How to Get the Better of Your Friends and Enemies

I

THERE is only one way to get the better of a man, and that is to understand him better than he does you.

It does not matter whether that man is friend or enemy—indeed the difference between them is not antithetical. Both are men who are interested in you and in whom you take an interest. I am not sure that the interest of the enemy

is not more unflagging than that of the friend. He, in his sound, inveterate way, will lie awake nights thinking about you, while your best friend falls indifferently asleep and dreams of some girl who is touring the continent. An attraction equal in power—if it be not the same in quality—keeps them swinging round and round in the orbit of your life. That is why I have put them both into one chapter—enemies and friends together.

I would not have you think I hold friendship lightly.

Spiritual philosophers have always seen something sacred in it. There are in the Bible, you may

have observed, many mysterious statements; none, I think, is more mysterious than that reference to a "faithful friend," where he is called *medicamentum vitæ et immortalitatis*—as though in friendship there were the very elixir of life and immortality. Now the subtlest of modern scientists—I have named Dr. Baraduc—states precisely the same thing, though in modish scientific language, when he says that friendship between you and Kathryn—or Rufus—is due to the harmony of your vibrations, and that these vibrations may be measured (with perfect exactitude) by a biometer.

(You did not know Dr. Bara-

duc? He was a thaumaturgist. He used to walk the sceptical boulevards of Paris in a dusty black coat and a pot hat and no one recognized in the dingy scientist the eternal sorcerer. Public opinion is easily duped by a change of costume. Because the constellated robe is gone it fancies there are no necromancers more. But Dr. Baraduc, out in his wind-blown house in Neuilly, worked miracles, juggling with *gamma* rays and *alpha* rays and negative electrons, as the Japanese juggler plays with fans and lamps. And above all he measured—with that fragile biometer—the vibrations of human vitality—whence I

learned what friendship is; and enmity. It is a simple thing, the biometer. There is a Ruhmkorff coil; there is a tiny bronze needle suspended over a dial marked out with 360°. Over the instrument is a glass globe. That is all. Now place your left hand near it; the needle will be attracted and will swing ten, fifteen, twenty degrees round the circle, pause there for a given number of seconds, and return to its place at a certain rate of speed. The right hand will repulse the needle to some other point and at a varying speed. These data give the formula of your animal vibrations; they are the horizontal forces. Now in a

similar way the biometrist would measure the diagonal animic vibrations and the swifter mental vibrations of the vertical forces. And when he was done he knew—believe me—more about you than if he had walked through you with a lighted candle in his hand and a microscope in his eye. What is significant is that in five thousand observations made in hospitals and clinics of Paris no two gave an identical formula. But there were curious likenesses. And when these likenesses exist—when the vital forces in Rufus vibrate in fair harmony with yours—there is no power of circumstance can break your friendship or pry you apart.

And this harmony, if it be sane, fortifies itself. It acts, as was mysteriously said, as an elixir of life. Whence friendship, whence racial sympathies, and many other obscure and terrible forces.)

Friend and enemy——

While the white cord that binds my friend to me is strong—far-reaching back to other stages of evolution, it may be—no less binding is the black cord that ties me fast to my enemy and him to me. Hate is only love *à rebours*. The bronze needle over the dial swings to right instead of left.

Many things I do not know: I do not know of what tree man is

the seed, and I am a trifle sceptical in regard to the objective universe; but one thing I know: My friend and I and my enemy are as inseparable as the three sides of the prism. And it is a question whether Omnipotence, laboring through eternity, could divide us, one from the other twain.

And this is mysterious.

II

It is one of my Good Intentions to give a practical method of getting the better of friend and foe, but if you will permit me to wanton by the way, I should like to call back to your memory, my dear Philemon, a friend of your long ago.

Yours was an unexpected friendship. It certainly had not been announced by the Sibyls. You met in the days of youth, but you headed him by two years. He had pale hair and blue eyes and a gentle nature. It may be truthfully said that all the good in his soul he received from your mouth. (This statement might be illustrated by the picture of a nighthawk feeding its young; for so he gaped and so you stuffed his maw.) You lit his dim ego at the lamp of yours. You carried him on your shoulder. And as you grew yourself (the picture now is of Milo carrying the calf), you lifted him higher and higher from the

dust and infinite commonness of the street. Always you will stoop from the weight of him—so long you carried him on your neck. Year after year you held him up. Year after year you tried to waken his ego so that it might at least whisper "I am I." And you failed; you worked, cried, prayed, sobbed for him for long and precious years; and you failed. High as you held him in your arms he was still a child of Nothing; he was still a flabby twin of Insignificance—this friend of whom you had hoped to make a Living, Loving, Reciprocating Man.

Then, in despair, you laid him gently down on the rug and held

the door ajar. Without violence, without indignation, without anger, without a vehement gesture, with exquisite tact and smiling simplicity you said to him: "Scat!"

Cautiously he descended the stairs, as though he were carrying something infinitely rare and precious—perhaps a fragment of the soul you had given him—and disappeared in the commonness of the street.

That was long ago; but read here:

Now just the other day you were sailing with a prosperous wind, for a certain harbor. Your good ship, *Get-Rich-Quick*, was laden to the full with a rich and valu-

able cargo. Eight bells at sea. Suddenly the look-out, perched on the crojack yard, screamed dolefully, and, as you rushed forward, a shot raked the rigging. In a moment a dark, sinister, low-lying craft, flying the black flag with skull and cross-bones, bore down on you. The first to board the *Get-Rich-Quick* was the roaring captain, a hairy pirate, his face black with powder and wrath, a naked cutlass between his teeth.

And who was this stark and hairy enemy?

You have guessed; he was no other than the child of Nothing—the flabby twin of Insignificance.

As a friend he was a heart-break-

ing failure; but as an enemy he was gloriously trenchant and destructive. You would fain have had word with him, but he was too busy slaughtering able sailormen, bisecting the cabin-boy, and looting your precious cargo of Utrecht velvet, Oriental gems, and Venetian lace. With exquisite tact you leaped overboard and swam for your life. A few moments later you heard the explosion. Not content with looting the *Get-Rich-Quick* the hairy ruffian had blown her up—that ship of promise!—the deserting rats, the bosun's dog and all.

What you had to think over was this: In place of a poor, feckless,

inefficient friend you had gained a thoroughly effective enemy. And now you lie awake nights thinking of each other; you were never so nearly one—not even when you carried him about with you like a cockchafer in a pill-box. But bid the stark and hairy one have patience. There has been a way discovered of getting the better of one's enemies—and friends.

III

The way is this:

Understand your friend better than he does you. At first glance it may seem difficult. You can't very well lead him into Dr. Baraduc's clinic and take the measure

of his vibrations, animal, animic, and mental, set them down in a chart, and deduce his formula. The tamest friend wouldn't stand for that without tying. Happily there is another way. John Murdocharney is not your friend save for the sufficient reason that his vital forces travel in wave-lengths measurably akin to your own. Sandy McIngarack is your enemy, not, as you fancy, because he is an Ulsterman and the devil took an interest in him from the beginning, but because his vital currents run counter to yours.

The good Dr. Baraduc would tell you there is a psychic vitality as well as a physical one. Through

the latter he spied on your physical health—the cleanliness of the blood and the play of nerve and muscle and the decency of your flesh; but his study of psychic vitality led him, through a fairly well-lighted corridor, to the inner chamber of the house, where your ego—perfected in the long years of evolution—sits up and takes notice.

It is not an impossible thing for you to enter the house of your friend. It is not even a difficult thing. Unless you were swaying to an almost identical rhythm, he had not been your friend. Unless you had an almost uncanny perception of his ways of thought,

you had never found yourself in vibratory sympathy with him.

(One of your friends, you say, is your exact opposite. It comes to the same thing. There is as much unity between a positive electron and a negative one, as between two parallel lines.)

You put it as clearly, I think, as it can be put: The Little Gentleman Inside your friend is an ego appreciably like your own. Like and yet different. In order to understand his ego it is not going to help you much to lean, like Narcissus, over your own life and watch its current of joys, hopes, fears, desires, prides, loves, hates, distresses. What you have got to

do is to keep your eye on his ego. You must try and think in his way. When you were climbing the Eiger-horn and checked and said: "Jove! Murdocharney would enjoy this sort of thing!" you had already begun; you were taking your pleasure in terms of Murdocharney. The next time you met him it was easier to follow that sympathetic way of thinking. And while that huge fellow sprawled in your library chair and talked without end, you found it quite possible to foretell the foreward trend of his thought. It is what anyone can do with practice; for, while he lounges there letting his thoughts go, his ego has let down the draw-

bridge and stepped out, unafraid. And the thing grows on you. The practice of putting yourself in your friend's place—of thinking in terms of his ego—brings about a very peculiar kind of sympathy; the vibrations get into closer accord; and after a while you can forecaste, with the exactitude of a barometer, the subtle and coming changes of his mood, of which he himself is not yet conscious. It can be done. It is done every day by men who do not know what they are doing, but who are able nevertheless to work the seeming miracle.

It is an old rule, but indefectible: Put yourself in his place. If

you can think not only your own thoughts but Murdocharney's thoughts, as well, you've got him on the hip.

And you will cross-buttock him and break his neck?

By no means; for to understand Murdocharney is to sympathize with him—which lets the drawbridge down. I have been assuming that you love Murdocharney. It is not, perhaps, a lawless assumption that you do not love that wretched man of Ulster, McIngarack. (It is hard to adore with equal fervour all the inhabitants of the planet—especially those of the North of Ireland.) Whether you like him or not, he is the third

side of the prism. Only in one way can you get the better of him: You must understand him better than he does you.

There is one trouble with this thoroughly practical method of treating your enemies.

It is wasteful.

I speak from personal experience; whenever I've applied it faithfully and well, to a truculent and satisfactory enemy, I've spoilt him for all practical purposes of enmity. You can't slip into the fortress of—well, say an Ulsterman, and sit down with the Man Inside, without acquiring a kind of sympathy with his enormous, destructive ruffianism. The

stones he throws are smashing your own windows and he is firing your hayricks; but you find yourself first appreciating his skill and then feeling sorry when he misses. That is the point where you realize there is one good enemy spoiled. You have begun to think in terms of McIngarack. In a little while you are able not only to think as he thinks, but you can think a minute ahead of him—and then you can lead him into camp.

It is practical; it is not hard; but as I have said it is wasteful—it is a wanton destruction of enemies. For you cannot know a man—know the Man Inside—and hate him.

Have you read Feltham? He says: "I never yet knew any man so bad, but some have thought him honest; and afforded him love. Nor ever any so good, but some have thought him vile, and hated him."

It was all a matter of understanding. If a man will but set himself to it he can come to an understanding with any man—be he roisterer, bad husband, politician or Ulsterman; for every man has in himself a little of the roisterer and bad husband, a little of the politician and more or less (God help us!) of the Ulsterman.

Being a nice-minded man, and honest, you refuse to be on terms

of sympathetic understanding with your enemies? You look with horror upon the awful possibility of their becoming your friends?

I sympathize with you; but it is a plain matter of self-protection; it is the only way to get the best of them.

IV

It was not without deep reflection that I called that splendid and eternal thing, your ego, the Little Gentleman Inside. He is indeed a Gentleman of the most ancient lineage, going back far beyond the metazoad kiss to the first vague vortex of intra-atomic energy and to a Causa Causans more mysteri-

ous still. This sovereign and perfect being is a Gentleman because he does always (and always with simplicity) exactly what he ought to do. He is, I repeat, a Gentleman and a Gentleman of infinite age and an upstanding dignity, acquired in the countless years.

Here I have something to say, which applies even to the American civilization in which these distinguished egos, born west of the Atlantic Ocean, are now living. What I first have in mind is a thing peculiarly American. This remark applies to no other nation. (It is to be omitted from the Japanese edition of this book.)

Thus, then: I have discovered

the most significant fact concerning American civilization. It is that when an American is really fond of anyone he insults him. I do not merely mean that he calls him "old hoss" and "bo" and the like; he has other phrases ("smile when you say that!") for his friend that would annoy a coal-heaver. What I do mean is that the Gentleman Inside is supposed to gather from a steady stream of cold insolence — from studied and ornate insults—from slangy jests that would break a negro prize-fighter's head—is supposed to gather, I repeat, that another ego of equal antiquity and gentility is fond of him. If that other ego did not

really love you, he would treat you with perfect propriety and respect. These slangy insults—this rough kind of guying—are the homages he pays a friend; they are his way of asserting a cheery and intimate affection. If you ask him why he heaves insults at his friend, he answers heartily: "The dear old swine, why, I love him, dash blank him"—and he curses him, with prodigious and unwearying fervor.

You would fancy the Distinguished Gentleman Inside would shudder at this sort of thing; evidently he takes it for what it is—the mere rough coltishness of an affection, exuberant but untrained, which knows not how to express

itself in grave, sweet words. He reads it aright. He knows that this insulting bluster hides a sincere, though shame-faced, love; but the stranger gasps.

There is one thing more—and stranger. Like every other ego the ego of the ordinary man is a Gentleman, ancient and wise and grave. Now when he goes out for an airing and meets friends or enemies —it doesn't matter which—they tell him stories. Little anecdotes, either roguish or vulgar. Go where he will—into a club, a bar, a tent, an office—he is confronted by a man with a vulgar little anecdote.

"Have you heard the one about——"

Everywhere. Always. From the judge in his robing-room to the scavenger in the sewer, each has his story. And the stories are generally of two kinds; they have to do with women or with shrewd bits of roguery.

Children love little tales—little dramatizations of life; and there is something childlike in the grown-up's delight in tawdry bar-room fables. In those I have heard there is almost always something cruel. If the laughter is not aimed at the splendor and honor of woman, it is pointed at someone who has been cheated (half the stories are based on business chicanery), injured, outraged, made

a victim of cleverness or a butt of cruel strength. Stories of the vulgar side of love; stories of comic pillage; epigrams of grossness and crime.

What intellectual pabulum is this to set before a Gentleman of long descent—he who is of a very ancient and honorable house—the Gentleman Inside?

It seems to me that when one has got the better of his friends (and foes) a very pretty reformation would be to treat them with fair courtesy in the first place and —in the second—to pay them the compliment of assuming that they have outgrown the stage of little foolish boys who squat, bartering

childish absurdities, in the stable mews.

O, my anecdotal brother, respect the Gentleman Indoors!

Chapter IV

How the Lover Can Protect Himself

I

IT was not last year or the year before; but you may remember the evening. A slim and ardent young man, you flamed to and fro in the twilight of my study, talking of love. I did not look upon you as a pathological case; I looked upon you as a problem; and with wholesome curiosity I asked: "How does it feel, Philemon, to be in love?" And you answered that

to you it seemed as though you were occupying the centre of an emanation, which thrilled and billowed on every side of you; and you said: "It is love."

"Your diagnosis is doubtless correct," I told you, "and you are indeed in love. But all is well. The danger is negligible. For there is a difference (it is vast and wide and profound) between being in love—and loving The Woman. You, as you have so well described it, are the centre of radiant and forthgoing emanations. You have defined precisely the state of being in love.

"But, Philemon," I went on, "it is not the same thing (for it

is exactly the opposite thing) to love The Woman. Then, Philemon, the thousand and one fierce and exultant consciousnesses which make up your ego will march all together, like a crowd to a festival, like an army to the frontier; and they will march toward Her and toward Her alone. That is what it is to love The Woman—She who is *ipsissima*—She whose tense individuality of vibration is for you so compelling that there is no other point of attraction in all the universe. That way danger lies. But at present, I take it, you are safe. You are merely in love."

Do you remember that evening? And the verses you read me? I

have forgotten the verses, but I remember the advice I gave you.

I continued: "Being in love, Philemon, never hurt anyone. It even gives one a kind of exaltation, which young men—who are not so highly developed as you are—often mistake for genius; whence the rhymes of youth. (Nightingales in love are canorous; with equal obstinacy but with less discriminative judgment, the cat in love believes he has a singing voice.)"

You received that remark without the approbation of a smile; and I went on: "Being in love never hurt anyone. In fact so long as you stand, self-centred at

the very heart of the radiance, you are protecting your ego in a masterly way. No dangerous entity, silk-garmented, long of hair and hard of purpose, can force the approaches to your citadel. Those rays of yours are all pointed outward—like shining spears, tipped with death. Being in love, O son of the Quirites, is an admirable protection for the ego. It is an armour for the individual. But if ever you love The Woman—Her——"

And there, I remember, I stopped; you had not heard me; you were not listening; the man in love never does listen to anyone but himself. You were sing-

ing the lover's litany of I—me—my. He who loves The Woman is a different kind of lover. He will listen to eternity, if your talk be of love, or if it so much as touch the hem of Her divinity.

(I like that kind of a lover—the one-pointed lover; for after the pleasure of living a love-story there is none greater than that of talking about one.)

Being in love, then, is a state in which there is no peril at all. It fortifies the ego and affirms it. Blithely the Little Gentleman Inside sits in the centre of his radiant emanations (as you called them) and twangs a guitar and sings songs to himself. Songs in which

girl's names rhyme and clink like gilt bangles. All harmless, Philemon; it never did anyone any harm.

II

I have said—or I will say—that man's first duty is to protect his ego.

Man's moral point of departure is egoism. Egoism is the sentimental reflection of the law of existence, by which the being tends to persist in his being. The dangerous moment—for man as for metazoad—is when he perceives there are other beings like himself and sacrifices to them a part of his ego. There is danger in it; with man

as with metazoad it leads to reproduction or to death.

And when is it death?

Strangely enough it is death when one makes the sacrifice of the Ego for oneself. It is life when the sacrifice is made for others. And the ego thus tends to persist in other beings.

And this is quite as true in morals as it is in biology.

It is true in love. You recall, perhaps, Sallust's brawling ideal of love: *Amare, potavi?* Once I quoted this to Alfred Henry Lewis; from the heights of serener wisdom he said: "To love and labor—nothing else is worth while." Which showed a complete under-

standing of the law of existence. Love, necessarily, means a sacrifice, greater or less, of the ego; but by his work in the world man may make good the quotidian loss.

Men who make of love the only purpose of their lives belong to that class of self-seeking protozoads who exile themselves from life. They sacrifice their egos, but it is a barren and suicidal sacrifice. These are usually men of a coarse type and it is difficult to make it clear to them that their kind of love should not dominate a life that thinks. That type of man hardly belongs in this book; for him love is death—what his ego has to fear is not absorption, but

dispersion, as a naked worm dropped into an ant-heap is multitudinously dispersed. My thoughts are with the finer man, the superior man, whose sacrifice is fruitful. For him there is danger.

Without irony and without bitterness, without cynicism and without impudence, tranquilly, as one recites an axiom of rectilinear geometry, I say: "When a man loves a woman he stands in peril of his life and of his immortality; and the finer the man the greater is his peril."

I do not mean only the man of genius; to him woman has often been nefast. (It would be all right were she content to sit and

warm herself at the fire of his endeavor and toil and celebrity; but she will insist upon toasting herrings on it.)

Any man who thinks and feels in a fine way stands in the same danger. And the danger is that she will tie a ribbon (and bell) to his ego. Her constancy, her devotion, her abnegation serve only to increase his dependence upon her; and this dependence lessens the man and limits his activities. Her sentimental happiness increases in proportion to what he gives her of himself—his sacrifice of some essential right of the ego.

Courage, Philemon; and make fast the gate of your citadel.

Things would go much better in this world if lovers would only remember how that first metazoad wasted his life in that first wild peranucleary kiss—and take warning.

The man must love the woman. The peril must be faced. And there is only one way, I believe, in which a man may sacrifice himself and yet live. I shall point out the way and name a man who walked therein.

III

And, first, as Mrs. Glasse said in the immortal cook-book, catch your hare.

One day word was brought to me

that Rufus was a lover. He was not a lover by choice. He was a lover as one is lion or shark or earthquake or cataract, simply because it is absolutely indispensable to be the thing it is decreed one shall be, and no other thing. But it would take a little more than the language of man to express how imperiously the Law of Things must have wished this especial man to be a lover, for everything in him cried out against it. Rufus was not born for love. He was forced into it. In some strange way he had foreknowledge of its coming, as cattle scent a far-off storm. He began by talking of it.

"Do you know," he would say,

"somewhere there is a woman wholly like the woman of my dreams and for whom I represent all happiness. What life does she lead? I do not know. But I know her nature, her aptitudes, her silent aspirations. And of late I have begun to realize that she shares my dream—that she, too, is waiting—that far from me she waits and hopes—even as I," said Rufus, "even as I!"

Of course he met her.

Now Rufus was a rectangular, iron-brained, legal sort of a man; his hair, which in boyhood had been red, was grouse-colored; he had already begun to look like a sort of man who would sit on a

judicial bench looking down with disfavor upon murderers and bad husbands and reformers.

And what was the woman of his dream, when she appeared in real life?

She was taller than Rufus—one of those tall, undulating blonde women, who seemed to have washed their hair in saffron and star dust and stolen purple irises for eyes. I thought of Dr. Baraduc and said: "The ideographic chart of the vibrations of her disharmonious life is written over with the odd multiples of five:

"5—sadness and monotony.

15—aimless desires.

25—ennui and nervous disorder.

35—visions—hysteria" and I pitied Rufus.

But Rufus, having met her in dreams, knew more of her than I did, more than Dr. Baraduc's biometer could tell me. He had sensed finer vibrations. That must have been a wonderful moment when the iron man told the pale, saffron-headed woman he loved her. To me and you it seemed a shocking thing like betrothing a water-lily to a firefly. But Rufus knew; long before he saw the long, drooping body she walked the world in, he had met her in the dreams whereof you have heard; and she knew. They

were not what we thought they were. Both of them were walking our world in masks and dominos. When they were alone they took off the disguises. Rufus let down the drawbridge; and what came down the drawbridge toward her was the gallantest, tallest, smilingest bridegroom of a man imaginable—who was no other than the Gentleman Inside. And when Marcelle (I didn't mean to write her name, but "Machtoub," says the Arab: it is written)—when Marcelle came out of her saffron-headed, narrow, white body, she was not at all the woman you or I could know, but someone shining and straight as a sword—a flame

without vacillation—the radiant Lady Inside.

Rufus had discovered the great truth.

The only woman a man need fear is the woman he does not know.

Is it clear?

Only the masked woman in domino is dangerous. From her, O superior man, flee for your life and your immortality. She is the ego-eater. She is the devourer of individuality. But when the Lady Inside steps forth she leaves her weapons and her destructiveness behind. You may go up to her confidently, smiling. You she cannot hurt, though you stand there

so naked that even your very hands are empty.

That was Rufus's way. It was easy for him because, even as a boy, he had acquired the knack of letting down the drawbridge of his fortress, and, in addition, he had the uncommon advantage of having met Marcelle's Inside Passenger when it was bathing radiantly in dreams. Even without those advantages it may be done; and must, indeed, be done if the sacrifice the ego makes for love's sake is not to be a deadly and lethal thing.

IV

A deadly and lethal thing—
Only you and I and, perhaps,

one very old man remember now that slim girl of long ago—all hair and eyes and beauty, like a Persian kitten. One would have said she was born to go down the way of life care-free and conquering; with flowers and sunlight and laughter for her share of the world. None of us saw that what was strongest in her was a passion for self-sacrifice that was neither to bind nor to hold. We thought she was born for a ribboned and holidaying love.

This is as much of Kathryn's story as can be told: she met a guilty man.

What he was guilty of was the greatest of all sins—the crime

beside which all other crimes are virtues—he lacked wings.

When I first saw him I thought there was something unnatural about him; after a while I saw it was his affectation of walking on two legs, while his real nature was crying aloud for him to go on all fours. With that a personable youth, with great soft eyes and a mouth red and heavy like some kind of marsh-plant. At that time he used to quiver with a kind of exaltation, for love had touched with burning finger-tips his wingless body. He was at his best, for even that bad kind of love adds something; but his best was so base it called aloud for reformation.

It was in Kathryn's destiny to hear that call.

"None of you understands him," she would say softly, as she stood watching him go away into the night—insolent in his happiness, and on his lips the taste of June roses and honey.

I wish I could say that the death of that wingless scoundrel was befitting his life; that the three Norns saw to it; but I cannot, for he still walks the earth—with the same absurd affectation of not going on all fours.

But who am I and who are you to judge the Man Inside his foul, vice-choked dwelling?

It was not for the part of him

we see that little Kathryn made of herself a sacrifice and a burned offering.

The thing is terribly hard to understand. For years whenever I thought of it I was beaten upon by iron winds of wrath. That some love must be all sacrifice, I know; but that it should be hers! She was so young and small. And I know that her sacrifice, since it was for another and not for self, had in it the seeds of life and immortality. It was in the way of evolution. It was with the inflexible law and not against it.

But could she have protected herself?

No one else could protect her.

What was to be done she had to do for herself. And she could do nothing because the one thing she wanted to do was to sacrifice herself. Not going blindly about it, she saw the beginning of the road and perhaps the end of it.

It would seem, then, that the woman stands in as dire peril of love as the man. If, when she goes forth from her fortress and comes to a barred door; if, when she beats her little hands on the barred door it does not open; if, when she calls aloud there is No One Inside who can come out to her; then she can do only what Kathryn did—choose that sacri-

fice of the ego in which there is life, not death.

There is small record of it all now—merely the white stone with part of her name on it; and your fading memory, and mine.

V

And how shall one know when one has met The Woman, she who is *ipsissima?*

Is it this tall girl, healthy, valiant, and gay? Is it that dark girl, all flame and mystery?

Only she can give you the answer; you alone can hear it.

But (frankly) I think you can get a hint of whether she is The Woman or not, if you are able

(in utter honesty) to say to the Man Inside you: "All is well, for I look upon her as the eventual mother of my children."

That is a splendid saying; splendid as quartz—and in it gold striations of immortalities.

And she?

How may she know this red and violent Rufus is The Man; he who is *ipsissimus?*

She alone can tell; for only she can hear the voice from within.

But (frankly) I think she may get a hint as to whether he is The Man or not, if she can say to The Lady Inside: "All is well, dear one; I look upon him in the fine

Roman way as *cunarum emptor*—a buyer of cradles."

And I think of a baby crawling on the floor; when a baby, crawling on the floor, finds anything there—from a beetle to a button—he puts it in his mouth. And I think of woman, wandering about the earth and going to and fro in it; when a woman finds anything bright, absurd, and casual, she picks it up and puts it on her head? It doesn't matter what it is—a beetle, a button, a dead bird, a bunch of grass, a scarlet rag, glass beads, the skin of a frog or the tail of a squirrel—anything gay and foolish. I do not know that any scientist has explained why

women—always and in every land and on every degree of latitude—put these strange and dreadful things on their heads. Philosophers have never given a solution of this amazing habit. My own theory (I think) is sound.

For ages women have been putting these ridiculous things on their heads with the sly, indirect desire of making men see that they are uncrowned. What she is trying to say in her oblique way is: "Don't you see, you've forgotten to give me a crown!" The idiot does not see; he is a blind ass; and the patient woman goes on putting bright things on her head, in the long hope that some day he

will see what she is hinting at. Every woman knows, at heart, that she ought to have a crown. This belief is embedded in her nature, like a triangle in a circle. Beautiful or ugly, chatelaine or serf, she has an instinctive knowledge that she is only provisorily inferior; and she is right—somewhere down the lane of evolution there waits for her a splendid, spiritual revenge.

But O woman, do not take it yet; above all do not take it upon that little ego in the cradle, squalling "I am I." He too is aged and hunting for a crown, as you are.

If he is haughty, humor him; treat him as a distinguished guest

—a man of some celebrity, who is stopping in your house for a while. Bear with him—even as you have borne him.

And don't be a mother to him.

Chapter V

How to Get What You Want; Also How to Prevent Others From Taking It Away From You

I

("YOU have not said a word about physical health."

Quite true; so far I have not said anything about the body's well-being. Of course it is an essential thing; indeed the most essential thing; for there is small pleasure in possessing gold basins if you can spit only blood into

them; but I have taken it for granted that you will house the Gentleman Inside in a cleanly and nobly-kept mansion. That is understood.)

You have seen the ego wake, screaming to a knowledge of its glorious self; you have seen its pathetic struggle to hold its own in a clash of family interests; you have seen it go warily round friend and foe, seeking a way of capturing those fortresses; and you have seen it in the more perilous adventures of love and marriage.

And now (are you quite comfortable? Let me put a pillow at your back). I am going to ask you to consider the ego—

the Man Inside—in its broader relationship to that group, which is known as humanity. At this point, you see, one may go down one of many roads. Up to this point we have come down a highway; here the ways branch and cross like the nerves in the hand. And here one must pick and choose.

I do not know what your business in the world is; I do not greatly care; it may be carving heroic, eternal statues like George Gray Barnard; it may be, like James Huneker, fashioning (of steel and gold and crystal) perfect prose; it may be splitting matches—dreary work if the knife be dull;

it may be breeding orchids; it may be writing fugues, or building walls, or scouring sewers, or selling coats, or buying money; whatever it is, I am going to write about it.

And first of all——

The world belongs to the man who is aware of his ego.

The world, I say, belongs to the man who knows himself and who is so entirely the master of his will and his thought, that he can do things without giving men any answer other than "yes" or "no" —indifferently—all his life long. That man is Bismarck; that man is every man who has ever held the world in his hands.

He knows himself; he has come

to a clear understanding with his ego; and he knows exactly what he wants to do—exactly.

I met (it was in a book) one of Gorki's Homeric tramps; his name was Malva; and his confession was, in its essence, the confessions of all the wastrels on earth. Said Malva:

"If I'd only been able to know what I wanted! I have always wanted something! I wish—what? —I don't know. Sometimes I want to leap into a balloon and go oversea, far-away, very far. Then again, I should like to turn all men into tops and set them spinning round and round in front of me. I should like to look at

them and laugh. Sometimes I am sorry for all the world and for myself, especially for myself. And at another time I feel like killing everybody in horrible ways—and myself too. And I don't know what I want."

That is the wastrel, a Homeric one if you will, but still the eternal wastrel. This evening (as I walked out with my dog) I saw him sitting on a bench in the park, ragged, patient as though he expected the East Wind to bring him supper and a tent—the man who did not know what he wanted; the man who was not on speaking terms with his ego and could in nowise find out what he wanted. A less

Homeric Malva; and a passing policeman prodded him with a club and he drifted on, no-whither.

You can have what you want—if you know what it is you want, and if you and the Man Inside are of one mind. You must get it clear in your understanding that he is the head of the firm. He it was (and no other) who woke and roared: "Lo, I am I." It was he who rode, conquering, down love's road. And unless he shouts through your mouth, your voice is but a whisper and no man will heed it. Unless his voice is speaking, the Adversary will not go back when you bid him go back and give you room and place.

(The Adversary?

You know what I mean; the Adversary is anonymous because he is collective—he is all things and all men. The harshness of any one man to you is only the advanced, out-thrust point of the harshness of mankind to mankind. The child who dirties you as you pass is not throwing his own dirt; it is the dirt of a city, a caste, a civilization. The Adversary is terrible because he is collective.)

If you are on good terms with the Man Inside; if you know what the ego wants, you have but to step forth and take it in your hands.

II

There has been coming into the world of late a kind of ego that wanted wealth.

I rather admire that sort of man. There is something splendid about riches—a splendor so captivating that in many religions you will find heaven pictured as a kind of idealized goldsmith's shop.

Wealth is ennobling.

Do not lend ear to the harsh cries of the poor man, who is, in our civilization, merely a man who wants to be rich; riches make for virtue. To be rich is to be three-parts of the way on to perfection. To be poor—O rare Owen Feltham!

—is to be made a pavement for the tread of full-minded men.

Quisquis habet nummos——

(There is, I admit, something mystic and salvational about poverty; it is indeed a sacred thing—a sacred attribute of Divine Integrity, which has always come into the world, symbolically, with empty hands; but that mysticism has no place in this book.)

Wealth is good.

That was a fine Aryan saying: "He who sows corn sows holiness"; it lies at the basis of our Aryan civilization.

I happen to have met (casually) one of these egos who come into the world bent upon getting wealth.

It was housed in the body of an old man—an old man, incredibly alert and awake and shrewd. Under the name of Mr. John D. Rockefeller he had come to Compiegne in France in order to escape the *ennuis* and notorieties of being the richest man in America. And he used to "potter about" the streets and roads. Not idly. Many things had happened in that pleasant corner of the world—things memorable, epochal, eternal. They interested him not at all. Not idly, he went about asking: "How much do these workingmen get? How much can they live on? What is the price of this—and that—and what are the taxes?"

Day after day, he put this kind of questions to the men he met in his walks. Every question had to do with his life purpose, which is, I presume, getting wealth.

It was right. His will was shaped, one-pointed, like a spear. It wasn't like a wheel and it wasn't like a skein of tangled wool. He and the Man Inside were of one mind and of one will; they wanted wealth; and—I trust I am not violating his confidence—they got it.

As you may.

As any man may and indeed must, if his will, one-pointed like a spear, is aimed at that thing and no other. When I say will, I

mean will; I mean the decree, unalterable, irrecusable, of the ego; I mean the indefectible warrant of the Man Inside; that is the will.

It is true—it is a desolating truth—that in that high sense of the word very few men have a will at all.

They have wants; they have desires; but the Inner Man sends forth no fierce and blasting *ukase*: "Thus Do Thou!"

Yet these flabby things without a will—with only desires—get what they really want. Marvelously, mysteriously, every man gets what he wishes most to have. The strong self-knowing, ego-acquainted man wills: "I shall be

rich"; and he is rich. The man whose ego is within him, like a blind starling in a cage, has no will; instead he has only wishes—futile, fluttering, feeble, feckless things; but even they have their way with him. He is their victim; he is not the master, as one whose victorious will is a *ukase* of the Tsar Within; but they have their way.

That wastrel in the park, prodded by Law in Buttons; he was precisely what his desires had made him.

And that tawdry girl, shaming the street-lamps?

And that drunkard, taking the edge of the alley or smouldering in his club?

What they most desire they have; for it is an iron law that no man shall fail of his desire.

III

Wealth?

You shall have it, if that be the will of the Man Inside.

Power?

You shall have it, if the Tsar Inside decrees it.

Wisdom?

If He Within has willed it, you shall have wisdom.

It is ordained by a law as inflexible and timeless as that which makes of every atom a tiny solar system spinning in decent order. The law is absolute as an

axiom; but it has a corollary. And this is a truth so important that it would be well, I think, to stand back for a moment and look at it in perspective. One might even approach it by way of Ben Bolt.

Ben Bolt is my saddle-horse, a noble, sorrel-coated gentleman such as it was the good fortune of Captain Gulliver to know. (The account is in his travels.)

I ride Ben Bolt; I get astride his spine and grip his barrel with my thighs and bid him trot—and he trots; I lift the reins in a knowing way and he breaks into that glorious, tumbling gallop which takes us over the long hills into the sunrise. Now when we come

back (after the glorious sweat and triumph of that gallop) I rub him down (if Edward isn't about) and wash his feet and swab out his good old mouth and give him the freedom of his box-stall. In other words I have used Ben Bolt, but he is better—as I am—for the using.

That is the corollary, whereof we had word.

A man may gain power, but he cannot guard it, unless he so uses his power that others are the better for it—that they are made stronger and more capable of exercising power themselves. You do not want illustrations of that fact out of history; all history is an

illustration of it. In the immense penumbral forest of historic Assimilations there is always the same story—the same infinitely complicated web of the same eternal fact—which is: No man may have power unless others are the better for his having it. And what is true of power is true of wealth; and of wisdom—only he possesses wisdom who scatters it.

Do you mind glancing back at the ground we have covered in this chapter?

There are certain statements upon which I should like to lay the emphasis of repetition.

What the Inner Man wills he may have—must have, in fact.

And if there be no assertive ego, declaring its will, and its purpose, then the vague, futile wishes will have their way. (Have you ever met a wisher?—who pauses at a shop window and says: "I wish I had that watch!" and hails the passing motor-car with: "I wish I had that car!" None of these things will he have; what he will get is full opportunity to exercise this wantoning habit of mind; and his life, taking the way of least resistance, will go to slavery, drunkenness, the commonness of street-lamps, or that eternal wishing-place, the bench in the park.)

What the man wills——

The will of the ego is iron; it is

pointed like a flame; it shows the way. If you and the Man Inside have made your purpose wealth you can achieve your end; but you may not wanton by the way. Like that old, ardent, and active man of Compiegne, you must think of nothing else—you must think all things in terms of wealth. But (the corollary!) riches that make another poorer are not riches; they are loot. Is it possible to get rich by making others richer? My dear son of the Quirites, there is no other way, which is, at once practical and permanent. The man who makes others poorer is always poor; the miser is always in want—indeed, the very word

miser has a mysterious significance of want, destitution, misery. The reason is plain. The miser fails to see that he is not alone and cannot be alone, that he is, indeed, only part of a formidable whole. Your ego learned that truth long ago. And you know that wealth, power, wisdom are as a flowing stream, which is sweet because it flows—past your garden to your neighbor's field. If it did not flow away from you it would not be a stream; it would be a pond, which is the home of dead dogs and poison.

Then, once more, the will must be fixed on one object—not on two or seven objects. A bullet will

bring the quarry down; that is will; the quarry is wholly indifferent to the scattered shot of fugacious wishes and hopes and desires.

The man who gets what he wants is one-purposed.

As from a cellar of discontent, I hear a pleading voice; and it asks:

"May I have no pleasures at all?"

Dear son of the Quirites, the only pleasures you can have are those which fit in with your purpose, those which affirm the will, those which build the conquering character.

"A poor, barren life," you say.

But, don't you see, that if you are following the way of the ego—

the straight line of the will—you are getting all you want, everything you want — everything. What other pleasure is there? None.

You may have observed that nothing makes a rich man so indignant as the sight of a poor man spending money on his amusements.

At first glance you feel like throwing a brick at the rich man. A moment's reflection will show you that the rich man (from his viewpoint) is right. His object in life is so clear and pleasant—it is getting wealth—that he can conceive of no other tolerable occupation; he looks upon the poor man, seeking amusement, as

a wantoner. What he forgets is that the poor man may be seeking other things—wisdom, perhaps; and finds pleasure hunting a way of getting wisdom.

Know yourself: learn what the ego wants—and neither men, nor castes, nor cities can prevent your getting it. It is a law; just as it is a law that you can keep nothing unless other men, castes, cities, are the better for your having it.

"Machtoub," said the Arab, once again: it is written.

IV

If your choice is not wealth, but wisdom, you will admire the sage prayer of Apollonius:

"I pray that justice may prevail, that laws may not be broken, that the wise may be poor and the rest of mankind rich—but not by fraud."

Chapter VI

The Hive and The Bee

I

THE emerging ego is born into a city, a caste, a civilization; which is a strange thing. And—a stranger thing—every man is the sum-total of his race.

(This does away with any feeling of loneliness.)

When one thinks of the millions of Smiths and Montmorencies, of McIngaracks and Browns that

have gone to one's making, a bewildered sense of kinship takes hold of one. One hesitates to throw a stone at a blind beggar for fear one might really be hitting a cousin—only thrice removed. One cannot comfortably poison a well, for fear one of his innumerable relations may not drink of it. One never knows. The proudest man may, in some dark way, be sib to an Ulsterman. In the face of this blasting possibility one has to walk warily down the crowded way of the world.

I have said that every atom in you is a solar system *en miniature;* and so are you a solar system; and so are the caste, the city, the

civilization into which you and your atoms are born. It is a thought to set the brain rocking—this implacable unity of visibles and invisibles, of the infinitely small and the infinitely great. And fearfully one asks: "What is to become of my ego in this welter-ing unity?"

Bide a bit; you may see.

One of man's peculiar privileges is his curious faculty of seeing himself as other than he is.

He occupies in space a planet of absolutely no cosmic importance; and, absurdly small as his planet is, his life is so short that he never manages to crawl round it before death takes him. (It took him

thousands of years to learn that his earth was round; and thousands more to know it was ovoid; if, by change, it is square, he will not discover it for twenty—or forty—centuries to come.)

At this point a realization of his own insignificance beats in upon him. He looks about him. What he sees is that he is in an ant-heap where millions upon millions of his kind, recognizably like himself, swarm and fester. And he says: "God help me! do I indeed exist? Am I not a mere conjunct part of this awful and turbulent unity—not to be isolated!"

The man whose ego is awake has passed this point; long ago he has

answered this black and fearful riddle; victoriously he has shouted his: "I am—thou art—the other is." He knows; but his battle is none the less savage.

The collective soul is always armed against the individual who tries to escape from it.

The collective soul?

The phrase is in Pythagoras. He warned the Crotonians that a village has a soul made of the *consensus* of its inhabitants. The soul of united villages forms the soul of a people; and at this point of accumulated force there is generated the monstrous entity called country—*patria*—an abstract col-

lectivity. You may indeed think of it as a monster more terrible than the minotaur—its hecatombs are wars, his rites armed peace. We are looking upon this collectivity as a monster, because that is precisely what it is, so far as the individual is concerned. It is a polypus with monstrous tentacles —political, military, judicial, educational; and from it the individual cannot escape; he must live in its tentacular orbit, amid the whirling arms and sucking mouths. Some men have escaped from it, you say? Few men; mostly maniacs; escape is hardly possible. The cat puts up with an inquiet and precarious existence, rather

than identify itself, doggishly, with a master; but man has not feline freedom—he is tied to the collectivity; he is part of it, just as he is part of all the Smiths and Smythes and the man (God help him!) from the North of Ireland.

One's ego is in a bad way, it would seem, soused and immersed in a sea of universal kinship; and, when it lifts its head above water, it is gripped and strangled by the polypus—by the collectivity of race, caste, country.

How is the ego to preserve its free identity?—its right to vociferate "I am I"—in this welter of opposing forces?

II

Two things are to be borne in mind.

Evolution works for the type and not for the mass—for the individual and not for the collectivity. It has worked for you, my dear Philemon, perfecting that rare force, which is your ego, but —a bi-partite law—while it was pushing you forward, it was urging forward, also, the mass of humanity from which you have not wholly emerged. You are, I assume, the advanced point—the most advanced point—of humanity, but you can travel no faster than the mass to which you are

linked. (A composite mass, made up of strata of life-animal, vegetable, mineral. You are cousin to the field-mouse and the terrapin; even the stone they will lay upon your grave is a dumb, dark-brooding brother.)

It is a tragic law that if you would go fast and far you must haul after you—far and fast—the mass behind you. And it follows that your good is the good of all. Of course this is a commonplace—as common as sunlight—an old universal truth.

Your good is the good of all.

It is a statement which contains all truth, moral, political, economical; precisely as all geometric

elements are contained in a circle, all truths are packed into that one true saying: Unless a thing be good for the hive it is not good for the bee.

That is all very well, you say, but how am I to protect my ego—which after all is my main concern; how am I to pay my debt to the hive and yet protect myself?

It is the one question of importance; it has been asked in tumult and revolution; it has been answered in slavery and despair. It is a dilemma; in fact it is the unhappy dilemma of Balaam's ass, which was that either he must fall down flat or run upon a sword.

Every philosophy the world has

ever had has been an attempt to solve this riddle. Every experiment in government has been another attempt. Man has never done anything but try to find a way of living with safety, convenience, and delight among the multitudinous entities that surround him. He has done nothing but try to live in the hive, while preserving his own indomitable sense of individual bee-hood—of remaining a nobly-isolated, self-respecting bee.

You do not expect me, Philemon, to give you a rule which shall answer this old question; but it may be that along this line of thought you will find a suggestion.

Evolution is working with you; it is striving to create out of the mass a perfecter type of man; it has absolutely no concern whatsoever for the mass; its concern is wholly with you—its type. Now, the more vehemently you affirm your ego, the more surely are you working with the law of evolution —toward what end I know not, save in so far as having seen the beginning of the curve of life I can plot the continuing direction, mathematically exact, of the curving line.

Every affirmation of your ego is with the law. You cannot exaggerate the tremendous importance of clearing a space round

your ego—so that it may stand, like a statue in a public square, the light and air and ether all round it. You cannot be too positively Philemon. If you are John Smith, you must John-Smith yourself with hourly affirmation; and if you are Cecil Smythe, you must know, with granite certainty, that you are he. You are John or you are Cecil only because you have, with infinite age-long effort, projected yourself out of the mass—the anonymous Johnless and Cecilless collectivity; and the moment you cease to affirm it, that moment you begin to slide back into the confused and unidentified mass. Your only way of life is to be victoriously

John Smith—or Philemon; your only grip on immortality is your John-Smithness. There is no other passport to life.

And the other bees in the hive?

Unless they are living with safety and convenience (if not with delight) you will find small opportunity for being Philemon, *ipsissimus*. Thus it is a duty to yourself to see that there is harmony in the hive; that there is honey equally distributed; that the wax roof is in repair.

The Man Inside you—the Hidden Workman, Paracelsus called him—does not work for others, except for the compelling reason

that it is only by working for others that he can get his own work perfectly done.

III

The difference between a politician and a statesman is not that the latter is dead and the former isn't; there is a finer distinction; the statesman is working for the state that he may, more splendidly, advance his ego—making a fitter world for it to live in; the politician is burrowing back into the mass in order to find safety, warmth, fat comfort for himself.

One is going with evolution; it is the way of life; the other is

going death's way back to collective anonymity.

You are living in a caste, a city, a nation.

The form of government in which you live does not greatly matter; and cannot indeed be changed until the mass has changed —has got at another stage of evolution—for government is a natural product of the mass. The same law which directs the tiny cell directs the man; and the same law which directs the man directs the human collectivity. Scientifically. Immutably. The government, whether it was called theocracy, monarchy, republic, or empire, was always exactly fitted

to the collective mass of humanity, at the stage of development it had then reached.

To-day a social transformation has unquestionably begun. The human mass has changed its place along the road of evolution.

When will the transformation get itself accomplished?

In ten years—in a hundred—in two hundred; in a timeless world there is no need of greater precision. In a certain time there will be a new and happier life on earth, because the advancing collectivity will find it has produced a hive-law which fits it more comfortably than the existing one.

(One might note—by the way—

that there is not to-day among civilized powers a monarchy; there is not a republic. There is only one form of government and it may be defined as an emporocracy —a government of economic interests—shop rule; and the difficulty there is in adjusting it to latter-day humanity is to be found in its impossible alliance of two principles—the oligarchy of the emporium and the popular will.)

The transformation has begun.

Civilization is planning a better-fitting government. We shall not, I daresay, participate in this new and more harmoniously ordered life; but——

Here is the essence of it——

It is in view of that life that we exist and for it that we suffer; we create it; it is the purpose of our life—the purpose of our struggle. (No matter how blindly we go, vagabonds, deserters, enemies of the mass, we are, in spite of all, useful and necessary to those who come after us.)

Evolution works through the mass toward a type; and having created a stark efficient type it uses it as a snubbing-post to haul the mass along another stage on its journey.

Make strong your ego—for it must carry the weight of humanity!

Let it go fast and far along its

imperious way, O Philemon—for you are scouting down the long road where humanity must follow.

And not humanity alone.

Make the way straight, also, for your brother, the field-mouse, and your obscure cousin, the eel.

Chapter VII

How to be Good to Yourself When Dead

I

FOR, I take it, you will die. And when you are dead some pale woman, at your head (always there are pale women bending over their dead), will say softly: "A man is dead. A human rhythm is destroyed. So forever is broken that human form of the universal rhythm and the series of things it accomplished. He Who Was is reduced to insensible mole-

cules lost in the universal mechanism of worlds." And the sad woman, standing at your feet, will say, softly, too: "Pale sister of the Man Who Was, the vibration of life cannot be destroyed any more than midnight, with its folds, can muffle the vibrations of sound, or stay the winged vibratory light. At the head of this dead man is a candle. Stoop, sister, and blow it out. Already the little light of the candle is far away—voyaging; a second has passed and its waves are beating on the edges of the moon; in fifty-two minutes it will be shining on Jupiter; and in exactly seventy-one years and eight months and twenty-four

days it will be glittering on the metallic peaks of the star Capella; and passing on. You cannot stop that ray of light in its eternal way. You cannot bid any vibration cease. There is the candle. Here lies the man. The light of the extinguished candle is on its eternal way; and what of Him Who Was? That force, O woman at the head of the corpse, was perpetuable, as every other force. Of what tree is it the seed?"

Thus they who wash the corpse.

No one has ever said anything else—the endless retorts of "yes" and "no."

You, perhaps, know that nothing dies.

It was only the other day I saw Cleopatra dancing in the wind. All her dainty body, naked as a flower, swayed for me; her pretty body that all the stones of Egypt —all the herbs and incantations of the Magi—could not keep covered. She was dancing in a garden. The garden is that of the Bibliothèque Nationale, facing the rue Vivienne, in Paris. You may know that until 1870 her mummy —and those of certain attending high priests—was in the Bibliothèque. The men of science had unwrapped the mummy in order to study the hieroglyphs on the wrappings. During the siege of Paris (what time the Venus of

Milo was buried in a subterranean crypt of the Palais de Justice, in reasonable fear of the barbarians) the little body of Cleopatra was hidden away in the cellars of the rue Richelieu. There she lay as in the damp and density of a tomb. Came peace; and when they took her up the Queen of Egypt poisoned the air.

Thus a second time she died. And was buried in the garden. And now, in strange, many-colored flowers, she dances in the wind.

(That is tolerable; but often when I have pondered upon the somber and violent things that go on in the grave of "eternal repose"

—the swarming helminths and all the inexpressible degradations of this poor flesh so vainly spiritualized—I have echoed the heroic wish of Saint Paul—he who wished to be buried by the lions of the desert!)

And there is of the Queen of Egypt nothing left save the dancing flowers?

You were a wise Philemon could you answer that. Between those two thoughts—she is, she was—open chasms of darkness, rocks, and ghostly tempests. One thing only: You cannot destroy a vibration. Not that of the smallest star in the constellation of the Virgin—a light vibration; and not that

vibration which was the essential Cleopatra. Not one vibration; for, if you could, this poised and vibrant universe, moving down the groove of law, would fall back into chaos—the *tohu-bohu* whence it has so painfully emerged.

That much is true.

Science (that chameleon!) has confuted in the last few years the old dogma of the indestructibility of matter; but it has not yet established the dogma that the ego is destructible—any more than the eternal-wandering light is.

I met an old scientist once; he was sitting by the seashore, thinking—with austere arithmetic—of

the remainder of his days; at last he looked up and said:

"I have just convinced myself that auto-survival is a simple act of the will."

He had touched the edge of the great truth. If that will, which is the ego, has truly affirmed itself, it has truly made itself a part of the permanent whole. And if you are that sort of an ego you will find it far easier to go on being immortal than to make an end of it. Only the feebly individualized ego can drop back lightly and without struggle into the general mass.

Whence the sad necessity one is under of continuing to protect his

ego, even when, at head and foot of his bed, stand the sad, pale women.

II

I don't think it matters much how a man dies. Indeed it is not in a man's power to pick or choose. Everyone brings with him into the world the principle of his death. Thus one man is born with a chimney-pot on his head, just as another man is born with a bullet in his breast. Thus it was indefectibly in the destiny of Curie—the discoverer of radium—to die with his head under the wheel of a dray. It was in the destiny of that poet of blasphemy, Catulle

Mendes, to die in the dirt and noise and midnight of the train-yard of Saint Germain; and nowhere else. There was a man named Zola who spat upon and befouled an entire generation; and it was his perfect destiny to die, drowned in the vomit of his dogs. That way and no other. Always man carries with him the principle of his death. It was a strange and terrible death Huysmanns brought into the world with him. He was a worshipper of visible things—of appearances; he was an idolater of insignificancies and glittering toys; and he was stricken with a disease so rare and monstrous they had to sew up his eyelids. He had

lived to stare and death blinded him.

You have brought your death with you; you may have a hangman's rope in your pocket—or a martyr's crown. That is merely the fulfilling part of a destiny the curve of which was plotted back in the twilight of evolution. It does not greatly matter so long as your death, like your life, is along the line of the law. That kind of death is useful. It is indeed of an ancient and epochal utility. For it is back to the exact point where death appeared—and no farther—that we can trace the beginning of evoluting life. The protozoads are immortal; that is, they can die

only as a result of accident, never of old age. Perhaps it would be a trifle more precise to say the protozoad is neither mortal nor immortal; it ignores death—having in it no element of decay. Now the protozoad is the ancestor of the metazoads, which are mortal beings. And it is in the course of this transformation that death makes its appearance. It is the result of an adaptation—of a division of the cell of the protozoad into the cells of the metazoads. So, from the evolutionist's viewpoint, life begins exactly where death appears. There is a distinct relation between mortality and reproduction. In other words, life is a piece—defi-

nitely measured—of immortality. Death serves as the measuring-rod. That is its utility. It makes for the variations which are life. It bisects, at a certain point, the long immortal curve of life.

Did I say it stopped it?

Nothing can stop it. Whether you will or not that vibration, which is you, must go on; and it must go along the line you have projected.

The ages, timeless and limitless, lie behind your ego; but they lie before it also. You are the centre of a circle which has no circumference. All time and all space are round you. You are in eternity—like a ray of light, speeding

past Capella and past ever-rising stars beyond. The ego must go on; and it must follow the curve you have given it to travel.

Let me reveal to you, Philemon, a ghastly and abysmal truth: You are immortal. Like that far-off protozoadic ancestor, you are doomed to ignore death. You may change, but you cannot die. From the simple, through the complex, to the simple; that has been your ego's road of evolution. And on? Still going on. To what? To exactly what you have made it ready for.

Matter is vibration. Living matter is nothing else. And matter in order to continue to live

must adapt itself to the changes of the *milieu* in which it lives. What kind of an immortality you are to have depends entirely upon what *milieu* you have fitted yourself to live in. If you have trained your ego to live, it will live; and (formidable thought) it will live along the line you have started it in this life.

You can protect yourself (when dead) by so living in this life that the ego will follow the high road and not the low road. What you are you will be. You cannot change the curve merely by adroitly slipping out of your body.

Take the high road, Philemon.

The fairest company is walking that road.

III

"The law of evolution, briefly stated, is this: That forms emerge from a common fund to exhibit themselves for a brief existence in manifested form, during which nature's forces play upon them; their life within responds; the external and internal forces co-operate to raise the manifesting entity to a higher level; the form, finally, no longer answers the purpose of its existence; it dissolves; a return to a common fund is made, and a subsequent re-emergence takes place. The gradual perfect-

ing thus goes on until the limits of that kingdom are reached, whereupon the next emergence is into a higher kingdom."

I have quoted this paragraph—a plain statement—from Mr. F. E. Titus, a very distinguished writer; and I have quoted it in order to ask you to apply it to the evolution of the ego. The law of evolution—if it be a law at all—is universal, and its application to the immaterial ego is quite as exact as its application to the material body in which the Man Inside walks the world. The gradual perfecting goes on.

And your re-emergence, Philemon, shall take place.

IV

You shall emerge into a fair company?

You will find exactly the company you vibrated to in this vibratory world. You can meet only those who have projected their egos out upon curves similar to your own. The Inside Passengers who are going your way will alight at your station and no other. And therefore, Philemon, if you would protect your ego—when, at last, your strong body lies dead, with women bending over it—live well in this world; create only such vibrations as you would care to pass eternity withal. And, since

all is vibration—thought, aspiration, feeling—think highly, aspire nobly, feel purely.

Then shall you emerge into a fair company.

I laid down my pen. I said:

"This little book of Good Intentions is finished."

And then, I know not how, my thoughts went out to a sweet, wild girl I knew in the long ago. (Eyes the color of a bee, little Kathryn.) And I wondered whether she were lonely now. Who could have met her when she went forth? Long files of hooded, gray, sacrificial women? Perhaps there was no

one there; for whenever I dream of her she is alone. She is standing in a plain, so wide, so desolate, so empty, that she shudders with loneliness; for she is alone in the desert of her love; and, always, as she stands there, she cries aloud: "Is there any Living Man here?"

And to her there comes no answer. No voice. No sound of wings.

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